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RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU PRIORITY 6142  
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 7978  
RUEHNT/AMEMBASSY TASHKENT PRIORITY 0903  
RUEHKP/AMCONSUL KARACHI PRIORITY 0358  
RUEHLH/AMCONSUL LAHORE PRIORITY 8206  
RUEHPW/AMCONSUL PESHAWAR PRIORITY 6010  
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E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/30/2016

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SUBJECT: AFGHAN AMBASSADOR SAYS PAK-AFGHAN ATMOSPHERICS ARE IMPROVING

Classified By: Ambassador Ryan C. Crocker, Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) In a March 29 conversation, Afghan Ambassador Tarzi told Ambassador that he feels that the atmosphere between Islamabad and Kabul is clearing. On the eve of his return to Kabul for consultations, Tarzi said that he sensed that the GOP is eager to put aside the heated public rhetoric that followed President Karzai's February visit to Islamabad. His government is also ready to move on, Tarzi said, noting that he is already making arrangements to convene the Pak-Afghan Joint Economic Commission (JEC), perhaps as early as 26-27 April. He sees the JEC as an opportunity for an early high-level visit between the governments, a goal the Pakistani MFA shares. What is important, Tarzi said, is that the visit is high-level and high-visibility. Tarzi even had praise for the GOP's prompt reaction when the Afghan Consulate in Quetta was threatened by a mob protesting the execution-style deaths of 17 Pakistani nationals, whose bodies were discovered near Spin Boldak on the Afghan side of the border. The police who responded protected the facility, while an unknown speaker addressed the crowd to urge calm, calling for good relations between the neighboring countries.

¶2. (S) Ambassador Crocker agreed that the atmosphere has improved, saying that despite the publicity surrounding the Spin Boldak incident, the GOP has been restrained in its reaction. He also cited ISI Director General Kayani's March 29 discussions on intelligence sharing with his Afghan counterparts as a positive development. The Ambassador also praised President Karzai's decision to commit an Afghan National Army (ANA) unit to participate in the joint U.S.-Pakistani military exercise "Inspired Gambit" in North West Frontier Province in May.

¶3. (C) Tarzi said that, even during the height of the bilateral tensions, he had been able to conduct the Embassy's business as usual with no hostility from his Pakistani contacts. Now, he continued, many are going out of their way to demonstrate their interest in Afghanistan. Vice Army Chief of Staff GEN Ahsan has gone out of his way to show that

there is no ill will, Tarzi said, inviting Afghan GEN Bismullah Khan to attend his son's wedding and planning festivities in Bismullah Khan's honor at the April 19 Tripartite Commission plenary in Islamabad. Former ISI Chief Azad Durrani has expressed an interest in visiting Kabul in the near future.

¶4. (S) Tarzi also told Ambassador Crocker that he believes that he had sorted through the confusion surrounding an Afghan Ministry of Defense paper that had been wrongly billed to the GOP as Afghanistan's National Security Strategy (NSS).

(Note: President Musharraf expressed his irritation at the allegedly revanchist tone of this MOD paper to GEN Abizaid during their March 6 meeting. End note.) The Government of Afghanistan (GOA) is working on a NSS, Tarzi said, but under the auspices of the National Security Advisor's office. The MOD paper that had been passed to the GOP was a preliminary draft written for other purposes that has no/no official standing. Ambassador thanked Tarzi for the explanation, and urged him to convey the same message to senior GOP officials. CROCKER